

POLICY & PROCEDURE

Subject: Service Animals - AODA	Policy NO: 100-128
Department: Administration	Original Date: 2010-01-12
Approval: President & CEO (2026-10-07)	Reviewed: Quality & Risk Manager (2026-10-07)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to fulfill the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service: Ontario Regulation 429/07.

These procedures and practices apply where the West Nipissing General Hospital (WNGH) provides its goods and services on premises that it owns or operates, and if the public and other third parties have access to these premises.

POLICY STATEMENT

The WNGH is committed to the provision of accessible, safe and quality health care for persons with disabilities.

PROCEDURE

This policy applies to all WNGH employees, physicians, volunteers and students.

1. The WNGH recognizes the importance of service animals to persons with disabilities and welcomes them where the WNGH provides goods and services on property it owns or operates if the public or other third parties have access to these areas.
2. Service animals may be any animal that assists a person with a disability. They provide a wide range of assistance including but not limited to, guiding a person who is blind, alerting a person who is deaf to certain sounds, opening doors and retrieving items for persons with mobility disabilities, emotional support for persons with mental health illness, and many other forms of assistance.
3. Service animals may be identified by any one of the following methods:
 - The animal may be wearing a service animal vest, harness or saddle packs;
 - The animal may be observed providing assistance;
 - The person has documentation from a regulated health professional stating that they require the animal for reasons related to a disability; and
 - The person may show a valid identification card or training certificate from a recognized service animal training school.
4. Persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal will be permitted to enter the WNGH premises with the animal and keep the animal with them in areas where the public or other third parties are allowed, unless the animal is excluded by law. If the animal is

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excluded by law, the WNGH will provide another means of accommodating the person. For example, if the animal is not permitted into a certain area by law, the WNGH may suggest providing services in an area where the service animal is permitted.

5. It is the responsibility of the person with the disability to ensure that:
 - Their service animal is kept in control at all times and is well behaved;
 - The service animal is not a threat to health and safety; and
 - The service animal's immunizations are up-to-date.
6. The WNGH is aware that service animals are usually well trained and well behaved. In the event that this is not the case, service animals may be removed for any one of the following reasons:
 - Disruptive or aggressive behaviour, such as growling, barking or other signs of threatening or aggressive behaviour;
 - Causing damaged, including damage to any person or property; and
 - Poor health, such as contagious illness where the animal risks spreading the illness to others.
7. Service animals may be prohibited from entering certain areas for health and safety reasons or due to law. For example, Ontario Regulation 562 under the Health Protection and Promotion Act states that animals are not permitted in areas where food is prepared, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold, or offered for sale.
8. Some municipalities exclude certain animals from their jurisdictions. Depending on the specifics of the by-law, this may give reason for the WNGH to exclude certain animals from their premises.
9. Common allergies or fear of animals are not considered disabilities. As a courtesy, the WNGH may attempt to accommodate persons with common fears and allergies to animals.

In rare circumstances, a person may have a severe and debilitating reaction to an animal, such as respiratory distress. In these situations, the WNGH will suggest alternative means of providing the goods or services to the person, perhaps by limiting exposure to the animal or by another reasonable method.

10. These procedures and practices will be reviewed annually and in accordance with legislation.

REFERENCES

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).
- Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

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- Ministry of Community and Social Services. (April 2009). *Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.*
- Hospital Policy #100-99 – Customer Service – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities.